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**EXAMINING THE STATE OF THE FIELD AND POSSIBILITIES FOR
COLLABORATION IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT**

**A Research Project
Presented to the Faculty of
The George L. Graziadio
School of Business and Management
Pepperdine University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
in
Organization Development**

**by
D. Wade Shows
August 2014**

This research project, completed by

D. WADE SHOWS

under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the faculty of The George L. Graziadio School of Business and Management in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Date: August 2013

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Abstract

This study examined the state of organization development (OD) and the possibilities for collaboration within it. Thirteen leading OD professionals were interviewed. Study findings indicated that the field of OD is struggling and needs to demonstrate its unique value. Collaboration in the field was determined to be limited and participants expressed little interest, time, and energy for initiating collaboration, although they believed collaboration could help enhance the credibility and relevance of the field. Several barriers to collaboration were identified, such as divergence in the field and “turf” issues. Several success factors for collaboration also were identified, such as having a compelling and clear purpose. Recommendations for advancing the field are offered, such as identifying the unique properties of OD that distinguish its professionals from other professionals operating in the same space. Continued research should recruit participants from across the OD field to help confirm and extend the present study’s findings.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Ongoing conversations within the field of organization development (OD) question its vitality and relevance. Although warnings and concerns about the field date back four decades (Burke, 1971), conversations have intensified within recent years (Greiner, 2004; Greiner & Cummings, 2005; Jones & Brazzel, 2006). The conversations about the future of the field thus far have been initiated by the field's leading thinkers and practitioners—predominantly from the senior-most generation and predominantly from North America. Livingston (2014) added that OD practitioners need to adapt given the increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous nature of the business landscape.

The common threads across these conversations are: (a) the future of the field—both feared and desired—and (b) the need for greater connectivity across and beyond the field. Greiner and Cummings (2005) pointed to discouraging trends concerning the decreasing number of companies that have OD departments, the declining number of universities that offer OD as a major, and the decreasing number of publications focusing exclusively on OD. Other authors express concern about the field's ambiguous identity. Porras and Bradford (2004) warned, for example, “OD is everything and, therefore, nothing” (p. 396). According to research by the Global Committee for the Future of OD, other OD practitioners and academics share Porras and Bradford's concerns (Wirtenberg, Abrams, & Ott, 2005), identifying “lack of definition and distinctiveness of OD” as the leading problem (p. 468). Many, if not most, believe, like Weidner (2004) that “the field of OD should be poised to demonstrate its potential on the world stage” and yet it remains “at the margins of business, academe, and practice” (p. 37).

Suggestions for how to advance the field abound. Worley and McCloskey (2006) posited that “learning,” defined as creating shared value through a broad form of knowledge management, could fuel the field. Others advocate for professionalizing the field by credentialing its practitioners based on knowledge and ethics, as other professional fields have done (Church, Waclawski, & Siegel, 1999). Still others focus on “rebranding” the field; that is, clearly defining what OD is and promoting the value of the OD “experience” (Weidner, 2004; Simpson & McClowery, 2005). One of the findings in an earlier survey of OD thought leaders indicated a need for “greater connectivity across the field and beyond the field” (Worley & Feyerherm, 2003). An earnest effort to convene a summit of “some 30 domestic organizations with an interest in OD” to discuss “common interests” and address “some of the conflicts” that disintegrate the field fell apart due to a lack of the “trust and collaboration” necessary to overcome “turf issues” (McLean, 2005, p. 12). What these proposals and efforts have shown is that consensus and collaboration among the various stakeholders of the OD field is lacking and the consequence is that the need for revitalization remains.

Without greater connectivity, collaboration, and coordination, it is difficult to imagine how OD practitioners and researchers will compete in terms of value and influence with more cohesive professions, such as management consulting, and fields of study, such as business administration. Therefore, this study seeks to build upon previous work exploring the evolution of the field by clarifying the current state of the field and exploring the possibilities for collaboration among the many professional organizations that have an interest in the practice of OD.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the interest and motivation for large-scale, systematic collaboration among many professional associations that have an interest in the practice of OD. The research questions were:

1. What is the state of the OD field according to leading insiders of the field?
2. What are the perceived needs, benefits, and success factors of collaboration?
3. What are the barriers to collaboration between these organizations?

It is important to note that the published critiques of the state of the field were situated in a particular time span. The present study revisits the stated questions using data from interviews that were conducted with OD academics and practitioners from 2006 to 2011.

Study Setting and Population

Several organizations and associations claim to represent (to varying degrees) some aspect of OD as a field of practice. Therefore, the present study explored the potential for these disparate camps to coalesce into a larger network or alliance. Research on collaboration emphasizes the importance of diversity and involves as many stakeholders as possible in creating sustainable, collaborative solutions (Gray, 1989). At the same time, diversity needs to be balanced with what Kotter (1996) calls *position power*, meaning the active support of enough recognized and influential leaders so that “those left out cannot easily block progress” (p. 57). For example, Worley and Feyerherm (2003) focused on interviews with traditional OD thought leaders who probably possessed significant position power within the field of OD, while the Global Committee for the Future of OD’s survey of the field’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and

threats included a diverse sample but with indeterminate levels of influence (Wirtenberg et al., 2004).

The present study recruited participants from 12 professional associations or organizations whose members are involved in the practice of OD, such as the OD Network (ODN), the OD and change division of the Academy of Management (AOM-ODC), in addition to self-identified OD practitioners and scholars, such as human resources management and planning, training, facilitation, industrial-organizational psychology, and coaching professionals.

The lack of connectivity, collaboration, and coordination probably impacts each of these populations in a different way; however, the common denominator might be the wealth of untapped potential for increased influence with clients, knowledge sharing, and, most importantly, knowledge creation. Each of these stakeholders has a material interest in participating in corporate learning to develop new capabilities.

The conclusions of this study should have wider interest for those interested in collaborative, transorganizational, and self-organizing systems. It will provide a snapshot of the forces at play, both for and against, in a potentially emergent organization. While there's a clear *theoretical* benefit for greater collaboration across these populations, the degree to which this benefit is perceived and motivates action needs to be explored.

Significance of Study

This study assesses the perceived state of the field and, in turn, the perceived need for and personal commitment to collaborative strategies across the diverse field of OD. As such, it may serve as a precursor to the first stage of Cumming's (1984) model for development of transorganizational networks in which key stakeholders are identified and

qualified. Thus, the present study could contribute to the dialogue around the possibilities for the evolution of the field.

The present study also seeks to add value by testing what might be the lynchpin of the field's future development and impact: convergence (cohesion). Working from the research that indicates that collaborative strategies can magnify the impact of a field and its practitioners by increasing their political power, knowledge sharing, and knowledge creation, this research tested that assertion across the spectrum of stakeholders for both agreement and commitment (Hardy, Phillips, & Lawrence, 2003). In doing so, it provides data that could move the conversation forward. Furthermore, by providing a snapshot of current views and attitudes, interested parties can reflect upon their place in the continuum and reflect on how they might contribute going forward.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 provided the introduction to the study, including a background of the issue, the purpose of the study, the study setting and population, and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of literature relevant to this study. Chapter 3 describes the methods used to design the study, recruit participants, and collect and analyze data. Chapter 4 reports the findings of the study. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the results, including conclusions, recommendations, limitations, and suggestions for additional research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter reviews literature about the OD field. First, a brief history of the field is provided. Then, definitions of OD are explored, followed by a discussion of the current state and landscape of the field. Finally, key challenges facing and recommendations for advancing the field are identified.

History of the Field

Organizational consulting and research arose from the industrial revolution in response to the business need to find ways of reducing costs and improving productivity (Cummings & Worley, 2014). Both consulting and academic research evolved in response to the changing needs of the business environment.

The aftermath of the Second World War brought a new dynamism to the world of business organizations. First, the discipline of strategic planning in non-industrial and military applications had been experienced by many returning to civilian life. Second, the powerlessness of civilization to contain the horrors and excesses wrought by authority and the misuse of power created a desire for a better world (Jones & Brazzel, 2006). These experiences created new avenues for businesses and organizations in general to add value and improve productivity. Through strategic planning, value could be found beyond reducing costs and improving efficiencies. Products could be diversified and new and even unrelated business lines could be acquired. The playing field for organizational growth and success expanded and became more complex. At the same time, new theories, research, and practices emerging from the behavioral sciences (as opposed to technical colleges and business schools) were raising productivity by improving human dynamics in individuals, groups, and systems (McGregor, 1960). Through these developments, OD

consulting flourished until economic upheavals and retrenchments within the last three decades prompted businesses to constrict investments in such endeavors and refocus on short-term financial profits.

Today, organizational challenges and opportunities continue to emerge due to ongoing and rapid technological advancement and the ever-increasing globalization of business (Friedman, 2005). Information becomes instantaneous and universal, while polarities in wealth, education, and power widen. As the challenges increase in magnitude, complexity, and interdependence, organizational consulting and research will need to evolve in new directions.

Current State and Landscape of the Field

The OD field is populated by a diverse range of academics, practitioners, and professional organizations. The academic response to organizational challenges and needs begins with the first business schools and technical colleges of 19th century followed by the first university departments of sociology and psychology. All disciplines experienced a growth spurt in the early 20th century, particularly after the Second World War. Today, compared with their origins, these disciplines have seen more convergence and synthesis in recent decades. Today, several master's and doctoral programs are offered expressly in OD or organization change.

According to Cummings and Worley (2014), OD's roots has five "stems"—(a) laboratory training (T-groups), (b) action research and survey feedback, (c) normative approaches (i.e. human relations approach the best way to manage organizations), (d) quality of work life (socio-technical systems and employee involvement) and, (e) strategic change. Although the first three of these have declined to a greater or lesser degree, they live on in the values that energize the field. According to Cummings and

Worley, the latter two stems have contributed to the rigor and relevance of the field.

Other practitioners that operate in the OD field include management consultants, change management consultants, human resources professionals, training professionals, and OD practitioners, among others.

Several professional organizations also operate within the field. A few of these organizations are described below:

1. AOM-ODC, which is predominantly focused on building research and scholarship related to the field. Through research, teaching, and practice, it seeks to affirm the importance of integrating human-social, financial, and environmental outcomes; valuing justice, dignity, and trust; and generating ethical, positive, and meaningful contributions. Its mission is to develop theory and innovative practice relevant to organization change in topics including change processes within organizations; interventions; the roles of change agents; and problems of self-awareness, responsibility, and the political consequences of OD theory and practice.
2. American Society for Training & Development (ASTD), the world's largest association dedicated to the training and development profession. Members work as training professionals in organizations of all sizes, in government, as independent consultants, and suppliers. It stresses a focus on linking learning and performance to individual and organizational results.
3. International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI), an international association dedicated to improving productivity and performance in the workplace. ISPI sponsors the Performance Improvement Conference and other educational events like Principles & Practices, publishes books and periodicals, and supporting research are some of the ways ISPI works toward achieving this mission. Members include performance technologists, training directors, human resources managers, instructional technologists, human factors practitioners, project managers, and organizational consultants.
4. International OD Association (IODA), an international non-profit network of organizational development professionals, consultants, practitioners, and social scientists who share a belief in the positive nature and equality of human beings and want to share their experience and knowledge.
5. National Training Laboratory (NTL), which seeks to advance applied behavioral science in the service of social justice, oppression-free societies, and healthy individuals, groups and organizations in the world. NTL fosters learning in the theory and practice of personal and professional development, group development, group dynamics, organization change, community development, and social change. It also supports research, publishing, and knowledge building in applied behavioral sciences.

6. ODN, an international professional association whose members are committed to practicing OD intentionally and rigorously as an applied behavioral science. It proclaims a clearly-articulated set of core values, principles of practice, and ethical standards. The OD Network asserts its commitment to advancing the theory and practice of OD by cultivating and serving those who aspire to effective, successful OD practice, and by representing the field of OD by promoting more visibility, credibility, and influence for its members. Additionally, it provides resources, professional development, and networking opportunities for OD professionals to further their work.
7. OD Forum, which seeks to build and advance the community, practice, and leadership of the field of organization design and its strategic role in the connectivity to other disciplines. Members include internal and external consultants and HR practitioners, business and organizational leaders across sectors, and researchers and thought leaders.
8. Prosci, a leader in change management research and the world's largest provider of change management products and training. It has conducted longitudinal studies in the application of change management with more than 2000 organizations from 65 countries and sponsors the Change Management Learning Center at www.change-management.com as well as the Global Conference on Change Management and the Association of Change Management Professionals. Prosci's research-based models, processes, and tools have become the industry standard. Its Change Management Certification Program includes training credits from the Project Management Institute® (PMI) and the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM).
9. Socio-Technical Systems (STS) Roundtable, a professional learning community of business leaders, researchers, trade unionists, academics, managers, and consultants who share the principles and practices of socio-technical systems theory and a common interest in developing more humane and effective organizations. Its aim is to share and expand knowledge about socio-technical systems theory and its applications.

This brief description only begins to convey the diversity and complexity of the field. This nature of the field has led to certain challenges to its relevance, rigor, and very survival.

Challenges Facing Organization Development

Several researchers have characterized the OD field as being at a critical crossroads in its evolution as a discipline. While some argue that the field has lost its rigor and relevance (Burke, 2002; Farias & Johnson, 2000; Hornstein, 2001; Nadler &

Tushman, 1999; Nicholl, 1998a, 1998b; Worren, Ruddle, & Moore, 1999), others point to the accelerating nature of change and the fact that chief executive officers are placing top priority on effectively navigate needed shifts in their organizations (Cummings & Worley, 2014). At the same time, traditional OD, which has focused on human process-oriented concerns, has been criticized for lacking the urgency and business-related skills to add value in organizations (Worley & Feyerherm, 2003). This section describes three particular challenges facing the field that have been identified in OD-related literature: the lack of definition and standardization in the field, diversity and fragmentation in the field, and perceived overall decline of the field.

Lack of definition. Many definitions of OD are available and each is unique in wording and emphasis (Cummings & Worley, 2014). For the purposes of this study, the following definition will suffice: OD “is a systemwide application and transfer of behavioral science knowledge to the planned development, improvement, and reinforcement of the strategies, structures, and processes that lead to organization effectiveness” (p. 1). The important aspects of this definition are that (a) the effort is systemwide, (b) the effort involves the transfer of knowledge, and (c) the effort is focused on promoting organizational effectiveness. These distinctions are important. Some researchers have suggested that much of the work being done under the name OD is not OD per se, but instead is another discipline that is using OD methods and technologies for tactical, isolated interventions (Bradford & Burke, 2006; Church et al., 1999). Examples of such activities would include management consulting or training. Thus, OD in practice may be broader and more diverse than its definitions suggest. Church et al. (1999) emphasized, “if they are not morally bound by the core values of the field then they simply are not doing OD” (p. 49).

These definitions point to a key problem that has been discussed in the OD literature, which is lack of definition of the field, meaning that there is a lack of clarity about what OD is and what OD is not (Church et al., 1999). Subsequently, Church et al. claimed that much mislabeling and misunderstanding goes on in the field, to the detriment of the entire, poorly defined discipline.

The OD field is grounded in the applied social sciences (Burke, 1987). Its roots can be traced to such theoretical and research-based influences as individual psychology (Herzberg, 1966; Maslow, 1954), social psychology (Homans, 1950; Katz & Kahn, 1966), group dynamics (Argyris, 1964; Lewin, 1948; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), theories of participative management (McGregor, 1960), survey methods (Likert, 1967), and even psychotherapy (Bion, 1959). French and Bell (1995) pointed out that people flocked to OD through various pathways, as Weidner (2004) described, “unified by their desire to help those at the margins realize and express their voice” (p. 39).

This diverse range of influences is one reason why debate may continue to rage regarding what actually constitutes OD versus other types of organizational change and consulting efforts (e.g., Burke, 1987; Carlson, 1980; French & Bell, 1990; Golembiewski, 1989; Hurley, Church, Burke, & Van Eynde, 1992; Jamieson, Back Kallick, & Kur, 1984; Marsh & Merkle, 1973; Nees & Greiner, 1985; Porras & Robertson, 1992; Porras & Silvers, 1991; Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992; Sashkin & Burke, 1990; Tichy, 1978; Warrick, 1984; Woodman, 1989). For example, a closely related discipline is *change management*, which Kotter (2011) defined as “a set of basic tools or structures intended to keep any change effort under control. The goal is often to minimize the distractions and impacts of the change” (p. 1). Although OD incorporates managing change, it

notably addresses a range of additional organizational concerns, from coaching to transorganizational networks and also brings a humanistic perspective to its endeavors.

Moreover, as new trends in the management consulting arena continue to emerge, such as total quality management, human resources development, organizational effectiveness, business process re-engineering, organizational learning), the boundaries between what is and what is not OD continue to blur for people in and out of the field. Such confusion is clearly reflected in the lack of a standard universally agreed upon definition for conceptualizing OD (Church et al., 1999). The question is whether the definition is evolving to match the complexity and emergent nature of the environment versus blurry.

Fragmentation and lack of standardization. Another problem plaguing the OD field discussed in the literature is fragmentation and a corresponding lack of standards. This means that the field lacks organization and operates in a disorganized and non-unified fashion rather than as a cohesive field with criteria and requirements for OD practitioners and their work.

For example, some researchers have pointed out that the lack of standardization in the OD field, coupled with the lack of boundaries between it and other fields, means that the practice of OD is highly diverse and even fragmented. OD covers a wide range of interventions and activities—everything from team building sessions or process interventions to organization-wide systematic change efforts (Church et al., 1999). Church et al. went so far as to say, “there really is no field of OD at all, only a name and collection of people doing 101 different things that choose, for lack of something better, to use this label” (p. 52).

Moreover, the lack of entrance barriers to the field (Weidner, 2004) mean that anyone can claim membership in the field, no matter how little training or experience they have or whether they practice OD at all (Church et al., 1999; Weidner, 2004).

Church et al. (1999) pointed out,

If someone formally trained in engineering or advanced mathematics winds up in a HR department and conducts an attitude survey, they can claim they are doing OD and the field will believe them. This person is now an OD practitioner. (p. 53)

Whenever a group of people started to “organize” the field, practitioners displayed their strong aversion to hierarchy, arbitrary standards, and limits on their right to practice as they choose, such as without peer review (Cady, 1998). The results of three generations of openness and permeability—some would say, “anything goes”—has been that OD varies widely from practitioner to practitioner (White, 1998). Without uniform standards of practice, OD became defined by the individual practitioner and that person’s skills, preferred methods, and business practices.

Although OD’s multiple approaches and influences can pose benefits for the field in terms of its evolution and development (Church, Hurley, & Burke, 1992), it becomes problematic for establishing consistent criteria for the training and professional orientation for OD practitioners. One promising recent development has been the formalization of the Organization Development Educators Association, formed “to establish, advance and promote the body of knowledge required in OD education” (Minahan, 2012, p. 1).

Researchers have pointed out varying implications resulting from fragmentation and the lack of standards in the field. Weidner and Kulick (1999) believed that the resulting practitioner-centered nature of the field has contributed to a “buyer-beware” environment that undermines the field. For example, Weidner (2004) argued that OD

suffers from chronic inconsistency and quality issues. Church et al. (1999) offered similar concerns about consistency. They explained, “If anybody can work with an organization and call it OD, it stands to reason that OD will mean any and all things to any and all people” (p. 53). Weidner (2004) added that the unaddressed inconsistencies in practice have caused intractable damage to non-practitioners’ perceptions of the quality and value of OD. For example, the perceived value of the entire field can suffer when an “OD” intervention is poorly implemented because clients tend to generalize ineffective or counterproductive OD efforts by one practitioner to the entire field (Eisen, 2003). Church et al. (1999) further believed that as more and more individuals call themselves OD practitioners, the cohesiveness of the body of professionals weakens and the field’s core message and overall purpose are undermined.

Field is declining. A third critical problem facing the OD field according to researchers, academics, and even its founders is that the field as a whole is in a state of decline. Porras and Bradford (2004) explained that the absence of a commonly held definition of the field, the proliferation of techniques, and lack of boundaries with related fields, leaves OD consulting struggling to construct a clear identity and direction. Several thinkers have voiced concerns about the credibility, impact, and brand identity of OD (Bradford & Burke, 2006; Church & Burke, 1995; Weidner, 2004; Weidner & Kulick, 1999). As a result, questions about the continued development and growth of the field such as “What is OD?” “Is OD dying?” “Is OD still relevant?” “Where is OD going?” have been on the lips of practitioner/authors for the last 40 years (e.g., Allen, Crossman, Lane, Power, & Svendsen, 1993; Fagenson & Burke, 1990; Golembiewski, 1990; Harvey, 1974; Huse & Cummings, 1985; Marsh & Merkle, 1973; Miles, 1977; Spier,

Sashkin, Jones, & Goodstein, 1980; Weisbord, 1977; Van Eynde, Church, Burke, & Hurley, 1992).

Golembiewski (1998) blames practitioners' lack of results and impact on OD's traditional focus on the "process" and "experience" of an OD intervention. This focus on anecdotes and story-telling rather than measurement and empirical evidence of impact continues to plague the field today (Weidner, 2004). As a result, OD increasingly "finds itself at the margins of business, academe, and practice, its brand equity is called into question" (p. 37).

Weidner (2004) argued that it has been decades since OD has last been considered a buzzword for change. "The term *OD* has been officially stricken from many executive and managerial vocabularies due to negative connotations, associations, and/or experiences" (Church et al., 1999, p. 49). Moreover, if OD fails to distinguish itself from its various influences and the multiple related fields in existence, its decline might be warranted. Weidner (2004) predicted that if OD fails to regain some sort of identity and distinction, OD practitioners naturally will construct a professional identity that aligns with a related field that better contributes to their own brand. One might argue that this is occurring among coaches as that field increasingly adopts standards and certifications. Weidner explained, "Such an individual exodus will cause OD to erode from within, a process likely to be drawn out over an extended period of time" (p. 38).

Several researchers have called for efforts to address these and other challenges plaguing the OD field. Nearly 15 years ago, Church et al. (1999) urged, "Real change must begin now or the field will continue to decline until it truly ceases to exist as an entity at all" (p. 50). The next section highlights three suggestions for change that have emerged in the OD literature.

Recommendations for Advancing the Field

Although researchers have offered many ideas and proposals for strengthening the OD field, three particular recommendations for advancing the field are to increase innovation, define and set the boundaries of the field, and professionalize the field. These recommendations are described in the following sections.

Increase innovation. Several OD researchers suggested that the field should innovate, meaning its practitioners should offer new knowledge and practices to the field of change. “Minimally, the field must be open to new ideas and ways of thinking, let go of that which is safe, and demonstrate a consistent commitment to a change process that will require sustained attention and effort” (Weidner, 2004, p. 38). This may require moving beyond practices that were once staple interventions of OD, such as confrontation groups. The next steps in such a process include identifying the core issues facing OD clients, initiating relevant research, and achieving breakthroughs in theory and practice, and creating more cohesion within the field.

As a first, step, it is important to resume focus on the clients, identify the challenges they are facing, and determine the role OD may play in helping them address these issues (Worley & Feyerherm, 2003). Such issues may include virtual teaming, globalization, technological development, dealing with complexity, and sustainability.

Based on these needs, a coordinated research approach could be constructed wherein theories and practices central to OD could be defined, tested, and measured for their impact and effectiveness relative to the organization and its stakeholders (Weidner, 2004). Worley and Feyerherm (2003) offered the example of needing to conduct more research related to appreciative inquiry to

determine whether (a) there is a difference between a process that incorporates an appreciative approach and formal AI, (b) the intervention improves effectiveness, (c) current research methods are appropriate to evaluate an intervention based on social constructionism, and (d) AI is an alternative to or a replacement of our traditional views of system development. (p. 113)

They added that substantial progress has been made toward these goals because the research efforts have been coordinated, shared, and cumulative. At the same time, they pointed out that lack of similarly coordinated efforts throughout the rest of the field has contributed to its fragmentation. They emphasized, “If OD is to gain in credibility, then it must not apply simplistic evaluation models to complex systems of change” (Worley & Feyerherm, 2003, p. 113). This typically will require longitudinal designs and sophisticated statistical methods.

Weidner (2004) offered the suggestion of giving sizeable research fellowships to doctoral students to help advance the field of OD. He predicted, “This investment would not only fuel more robust research and publications about OD, but would also cultivate a growing critical mass of young faculty actively pursuing research related to OD” (p. 43).

Associated with coordinated research efforts, strengthening and advancing the field also requires the development of actual theoretical and practical breakthroughs to correspond with the dramatic changes that have been observed in clients’ needs and environments. Instead, OD practitioners tend to repackage old approaches under new names, such as presenting socio-technical systems theory as business process reengineering or presenting open-systems planning as strategic change approaches.

Solid progress on innovation may best occur through the formation of a guiding coalition that helps lead the way and coordinate research and practice efforts (Weidner, 2004). Kotter (1996) added that such a guiding coalition must consist of individuals who have position power, expertise, credibility, and leadership to win others’ support.

Weidner (2004) believed that before such an approach can be effective, “the field will somehow need to collectively amass, organize, and agree to support the change effort” (pp. 41-42).

Clearly define and set boundaries around the field. The need for a clear definition of OD that reflects the scope and boundary of the field is apparent to several researchers (Church et al., 1999; Weidner, 2004; Worley & Feyerherm, 2003). Without such a definition that clarifies what OD is and how it differs from related professions, OD’s survival will continue to be at risk.

Table 1 presents Church et al.’s (1999) distinctions between OD and related professions. They maintain that OD is about helping people in organizations. Although these other purposes may be achieved, they are secondary. They estimate that “only 10-20% of all professional consulting and change efforts today could truly be classified as OD by our simple criteria” (p. 54).

Table 1

Distinctions between Organization Development and Related Fields

Discipline	Purpose
Management consulting, organizational effectiveness	Enhancing organizational effectiveness, efficiency, marketplace viability, bottom-line results
Organizational behavior	Studying people in organizations
Industrial-organizational psychology	Evaluating selection and appraisal systems
Total quality management	Improving the quality of systems, processes, and products is what total quality management
Organization development	Helping people in organizations

Adapted from “Will the Real OD Practitioner Please Stand Up?” by A. H. Church, J. Wacławski, and W. Siegel, 1999, *Organization Development Journal*, 17(2), pp. 49-59.

Church et al. (1999) emphasized that OD is about humanistic change on a system-wide level, meaning it is aimed at “improving the conditions of people’s lives in organizations” (p. 53). Although they acknowledge that organization efficiency and

effectiveness impacts human well-being in the organization, they contend that the financial bottom-line is not OD's primary concern, explaining that management consultants and organizational efficiency experts focus on such matters.

In Worley and Feyerherm's (2003) assessment of the OD field and research with 21 OD practitioners, two clear camps were evident. One was comprised of traditionalists and neotraditionalists—such as Church et al. (1999)—who argue that OD is confined to issues of human process. These individuals argue for more spiritual, diverse, and organic organizations. The second camp was referred to in Worley and Feyerherm's (2003) research as the pragmatists, who want to incorporate analytic and rational approaches to strategy and organization design into the field. Traditionalists fear that pragmatists may conspire with organizational leaders to pursue wealth and efficiency at any cost; pragmatists worry that traditionalists will drag the field down into touchy-feely irrelevance.

Worley and Feyerherm (2003) offered what they believe to be an inclusive, three-pronged definition of OD to bridge these two camps: the research or practice must (a) involve measurable change in an organization, one or more of its systems, or its members as a whole; (b) include the transfer knowledge and capability to the client system; and (c) involve “a deliberate and conscious effort to improve the performance or effectiveness of the client system” (p. 111). Comparing this definition to Church et al. (1999), it appears that the third component of this definition has a decidedly pragmatic flair that traditionalists and neotraditionalists may not embrace. People seem to keep calling for more work, despite all the agreement that is evident in the field.

Professionalize the field. It is important to acknowledge that the OD field began through the innovations and actions of established professionals from other disciplines.

No boundaries or credentialing existed to dictate who was in and who was out (Golembiewski, 1998). “Absent boundaries, barriers, collegial oversight, or sanction from the state(s), the field of OD grew in size but failed to build the infrastructure necessary to create a profession of OD” (Weidner, 2004, p. 40). This precedent has continued into today, where anyone can decide at any time that he or she is an OD practitioner and start offering services as such (Church et al., 1999; Van Eynde & Church, 1991).

The primary method for professionalizing the field discussed by researchers is erecting entrance barriers, such as a comprehensive certification and recertification process (Church et al., 1999; Weidner, 2004). Church et al. (1999) pointed that out that the lack of credentialing in OD is quite unusual among professions, asking “How can someone formally and professionally trained in one paradigm (Kuhn, 1970) switch so quickly and completely (and competently) to another?” (p. 53). They give the example that physicians, attorneys, and psychologists cannot easily switch to another specialty simply because it opens up or because they are interested in it. Instead, they must complete professional respecialization and additional training to gain acceptance. Moreover, they add, “members of other professions know what it means to be a doctor or a lawyer or even a clinical psychologist. There are strict rules for those professions regarding such areas as training accreditation, ethical review by one’s peers, etc.” (p. 54).

Although the regular paths to OD include formal academic or non-academic training, Church et al. (1999) explained that with such open entrance, the ideals and ethics of the field are neither protected, understood, nor agreed upon. Church et al. argue, therefore, that entry into the field should be based on some predefined “accreditation process” that includes

(a) understanding, acceptance, and commitment to the field's values, ethics, and ideals; (b) competency in the behavioral science technologies and interventions used for OD; (c) understanding of the behavioral science theories that have contributed and continue to contribute to the OD perspective; and (d) experience and competence in working with interpersonal issues, group dynamics, and human relations. (p. 55)

Church et al. (1999) emphasized the need for credentialing, explaining “it is embarrassing for any of us to be associated with shoddy or incompetent work” (p. 49). They urge that some standardized, professionally governed registration, certification, and/or testing procedure might protect client organizations from getting OD from those who are untrained or misaligned to do so and ensure that the ideals of OD and the field itself remain something substantial and meaningful to people. By placing limits on what is meant by OD and who can and cannot call themselves OD practitioners, the OD field may finally be differentiated from other related professions, increase its power and influence, establish a brand, and increase consistency and quality across the field (Church et al., 1999; Weidner, 1998, 2004). Several OD competency models have been proposed.

Professionalizing the field in this way requires structural changes, such as creating a clear and unambiguous code of ethics and creating systems to enforce the standards (Capellini, 1998; Church et al., 1999; Weidner, 2004). The code of ethics would outline the expectations for practitioners—including what will and will not be tolerated. The Organization Development Institute, a nonprofit educational association dedicated to promoting better understanding and disseminating information about OD, has attempted to address some of these issues by developing a code of ethics for OD, setting minimum standards of practice, and defining the skills and knowledge necessary for competence in the field. However, compliance with these propositions is currently voluntary (Church et al., 1999). They established a credential of registered OD practitioner (RODP), which

signifies that the individual supports their code of ethics and have paid a membership fee. However, this group represents only a fraction of the population of OD practitioners.

Conclusion

Organizational consulting and research arose from the industrial revolution in response to the business need to find ways of reducing costs and improving productivity (Cummings & Worley, 2014). Over the decades, it has diversified and fragmented to address a wide range of client needs—and many of its offerings overlap those of other disciplines. Although OD as a field has much to offer clients, it faces key challenges to its survival, including lack of definition, fragmentation and lack of standardization, and overall decline of the field. Recommendations for advancing the field include increasing innovation, clearly defining and setting boundaries around the field, and professionalizing the field. The aim of these recommendations, according to researchers, is to help OD become synonymous with the ideals and values it is supposed to represent. The field would exist as a reality—even if scarcely practiced—rather than as a fantasy or a watered-down label (Church et al., 1999). Clients would better understand what they are buying. People truly devoted to the ideals and practice of OD would be delivering it. Much work remains to reach this goal and the present study was designed to help continue data gathering to move the field forward. The next chapter describes the methods used in this study.

Chapter 3

Methods

The purpose of this study was to explore the interest and motivation for large-scale, systematic collaboration among the many professional associations that have an interest in OD practice. The research questions to be explored were:

1. What is the state of the OD field according to leading insiders of the field?
2. What are the perceived needs, benefits, and success factors of collaboration?
3. What are the barriers to collaboration between these organizations?

This chapter reviews the methods used for collecting and analyzing the data. The research design, sample, measurement procedures, and data analysis procedures are discussed.

Research Design

A qualitative research design was used to gather and analyze data related to the research questions. Qualitative studies are located within the post-positivist worldview, which argues that knowledge is socially constructed and subjective, meaning that multiple realities exist related to any research topic (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research aims to uncover the nuances and complexity of human existence in real-world settings and to construct a holistic, multifaceted view of the phenomenon. To do so, research is conducted in natural settings. Qualitative researchers are primarily concerned with an emerging process that is ever changing and captures the rich human meaning of life as it is lived in real world situations.

The key benefit of qualitative approaches is the generation of rich, detailed accounts related to the research questions (Creswell, 2013). However, the emergent and subjective nature of qualitative approaches means that there can be greater risks of the

imposition of researcher bias. To help reduce this limitation, qualitative researchers should explicitly acknowledge their biases, values, and judgments (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2007). Qualitative methods are particularly useful when relatively little is known about the topic or when the variables related to a topic are yet to be defined (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Qualitative research is carried out using many different designs (Creswell, 2013). The specific design used in the present research was research interviewing. Interviewing is useful for gathering participants' subjective thoughts, feelings, motivations, meanings, and worldviews that are difficult to detect using other methods (Kvale, 1996). The aim interviewing is to discover new information and gather "descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena" (p. 6).

An important aspect of interviewing is that the researcher acts as the human instrument of data collection. This makes it even more critical for the researcher to acknowledge any biases and to seek to actively listen to and capture the participants' worldviews and accounts, distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) called this *theoretical sensitivity*, meaning "the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn't" (p. 42).

Participants

Participant selection procedures require attention to sample size, selection criteria, and selection procedures. Kvale (1996) provided guidelines for sample size in interview studies, explaining that a suitable sample size could range from 5 to 25, depending upon the study purpose, nature of the study, and the desired data. The present study's sample

size was 13, which allowed for collection of detailed accounts without the risk of information overload that would compromise the generation of in-depth insights.

Two selection criteria were defined for this study. First, the participant needed to be an experienced OD academic or practitioner. *Experienced* was defined as having 15 years or more in the field. Academics additionally had to have published at least three OD articles or books. The second criterion was that the participant was willing to complete a 1-hour interview as part of the study. Third, an attempt was made to draw participants from across the major professional associations, universities, and large OD consulting houses.

Qualitative research utilizes purposive sampling strategies, meaning that participant selection is ordered by a guiding intention consistent with the study purpose (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). Miles et al. listed 16 different strategies in their qualitative research guide. This study utilized convenience, snowball, and criterion sampling approaches. Convenience sampling occurs when the researcher utilizes his or her personal and professional network to locate study candidates. Snowball sampling occurs when participants are asked to suggest additional study candidates. Criterion sampling occurs when a set of selection criteria help determine which candidates qualify for the study.

Participant selection began by generating a list of all prospective study candidates based on the researcher's knowledge of the OD field gained through Pepperdine University's master's of science in OD program. These potential candidates were contacted in-person, by email, and by telephone and informed of the purpose of the study and nature of participation. They also were invited to participate at this time. Candidates

who agreed to participate were scheduled for a telephone or in-person interview and were sent an informed consent form (see Appendix A) to complete and return.

The 13 participants interviewed for this study included founders of the field and its seminal institutions as well as leading academics and practitioners who have been or who were at the time of the study associated with prominent degree programs, professional associations, and consulting organizations in the field. More detailed descriptions of the participants are not provided in this study due to concerns for protecting participants' confidentiality.

Confidentiality and Consent Procedures

This study was conducted under the guidance of the Pepperdine University Institutional Review Board. All human subject protections were observed. Participation in this study was voluntary. Respondents were informed of their right to decline any question or to withdraw from the study at any point.

Participants faced minimal risks due to participation in this study. The only potential but unlikely risk was feeling emotional discomfort as they reflected on the OD field or their involvement in it. All data and signed consent forms were kept confidential. Any hard copies of the consent forms were kept in a locked cabinet accessible only to the researcher. These will be destroyed after 3 years. Electronic versions of the de-identified raw data will be kept indefinitely for research purposes.

Data Collection

Thirteen semi-structured interviews were conducted between October and December 2010. A semi-structured interview design was used to guide the research conversations (see Appendix B). Questions concerned three topics:

1. Current state of field regarding collaboration and the need for collaboration. Three questions (Questions 1, 3, and 4) inquired about participants' views of the current level of collaboration in the field, the perceived need for collaboration, and the purpose for and benefits of collaboration.
2. Possibilities for collaboration. Two questions (Questions 5 and 6) inquired about the potential common ground of the various OD-related professional organizations and any barriers to greater collaboration and interaction among the professional associations.
3. Personal involvement and willingness. Four questions inquired about the interviewees' involvement in OD-related professional organizations and any experiences they have had collaborating with members from other professional organizations. These also were asked about their willingness to become involved in participating, organizing, or leading efforts to connect and coordinate the field.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began with the creation of a transcript for each interview. Each interview was assigned a pseudonym to enable the researcher to distinguish the participants without breaching confidentiality. Content analysis consisted of five steps based on Miles et al.'s (2013) procedure:

1. Data were organized by question so that all the participants' responses were displayed. Each response was associated with the appropriate pseudonym to allow the researcher to distinguish the each participant's responses.
2. Initial coding was performed ad hoc, wherein each response was read carefully and meaning units were identified and assigned a descriptive code (e.g., "lack of innovation and new knowledge").
3. Secondary coding involved reviewing the initial codes and grouping them into like categories. For example, "lack of innovation and new knowledge" was grouped with "field is declining" and placed under a supra-ordinate code of "current state of the field."
4. Saturation was calculated as the number of people reporting each code. Only those codes reported by at least 20% of the participants ($n = 3$) were retained. Such codes were considered significant.
5. As a final step, the analysis was examined by a second rater skilled in qualitative research. The second rater identified 12 issues with the coding. These were discussed and resolved. The results in chapter 4 reflect the final analysis.

Researcher Bias

In a qualitative study, it is important to acknowledge the researcher's background and any biases he or she brings to the researcher. As master's student studying OD, I have enjoyed getting involved in a variety of OD professional organizations and applying OD interventions to enhance my own or my work group's performance whenever possible. Through these experiences, I simultaneously perceived the potential for OD in human systems and also witnessed ways that OD has underperformed or was non-existent in the three different organizations where I have been employed. I developed a suspicion that the field is fragmented and under-organized in a way that seems to run counter to its values and its contributions to clients. Motivated by my dual belief in OD and my concerns about its present and future, I launched the present research to better understanding the nature of collaboration in the field and the reasons for why this was so.

Summary

This qualitative research interview study was conducted with 13 academics and practitioners in the OD field. Each participant completed one interview that lasted 45 minutes to 1 hour in duration. The data was examined using content analysis.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the interest and motivation for large-scale, systematic collaboration among many professional associations that have an interest in OD practice. This chapter reports the results. A description of the participants is provided first. The first set of themes reported related to the state of the OD field are provided next. The second set of themes reported discuss findings related to the possibilities for collaboration, including the perceived need for collaboration, purpose and benefits of collaboration, barriers to collaboration, and success factors for collaboration.

The 13 participants interviewed for this study included founders of the field and its seminal institutions as well as mid-career academics and practitioners who have been or who were at the time of the study associated with prominent degree programs, professional associations, and consulting organizations in the field. More detailed descriptions of the participants are not provided in this study due to concerns for protecting participants' confidentiality. Pseudonyms are used in this chapter to aid in data reporting. Participants were almost evenly divided by gender, with 46% being female, predominantly senior practitioners (77% having more than 25 years of experience) and almost exclusively Caucasian (92%). Furthermore, all participants affirmed their formal, active participation with two or more professional OD organizations in their careers.

State of the Organization Development Field

Participants were asked for their evaluations of the OD field (see Table 2). Their responses pointed to three key themes: the field is struggling (69%), the field needs definition and formalization (54%), and OD needs to demonstrate its unique value (54%).

All three categories suggest that the sample believes that the field is not currently thriving.

Table 2

Participants' Evaluations of the Organization Development Field

Theme	<i>n</i> *	%
Field is Struggling Lost its bearings (54%) Lack of innovation and new knowledge (31%) Field is declining (31%)	9	69%
Field Needs Definition and Formalization Lack of definition and standards (46%) No processes for developing organization development professionals (31%) Ambivalence about "accreditation/certification" (15%)	7	54%
Field Needs to Demonstrate its Unique Value Boundaries of field overlap other disciplines (31%) No recognized value by client systems (23%) Difficulty showing return on investment (15%)	7	54%

N = 13; *several participants named more than one theme

Field is struggling. More than two thirds (69%) of the participants voiced that the OD field is struggling for various reasons. Some participants contended that the field has lost its bearings, such as losing its academic roots or not practicing the inclusiveness or change readiness it preaches. Alan shared his frustration about the weakening theoretical base in the field, stating, "I worry about where am I going to find consultants in the future who have really strong theoretical underpinning to the work that they do."

Other participants believe the OD field lacks innovation and new knowledge, and is a state of decline. Victor pointed out that the so-called "new" interventions being described, such as appreciative inquiry and the large group conference movement date back to 1985 and 1965, respectively. He summarized,

we just don't find anything today that's really groundbreaking The field of OD is relatively stagnant and has been for quite some time. . . . I think the driving need now for the field of OD is innovation.

Field needs definition and formalization. Roughly half (54%) the participants reported that the OD field needs definition and formalization in terms of clear definition and standards, processes for developing OD professionals, and accreditation and certification (although substantial ambivalence was evident among the participants on this last issue). Ivan stressed the need to establish a common body of knowledge and processes:

We need to learn from other professions: how do we educate people into the field, develop a common body of knowledge, organize the processes? . . . In our field, there's nothing. We need a common ground of competency that practitioners have to actually to be effective. . . . There needs to be a pure teaching of knowledge and skills required to call yourself a professional in the field. The field started on a professional footing. Then the quacks came in. Those are the guys that are screwing the field and the clients.

At the same time, Brodwin reflected on the attempts that have been made to establish standards and credentials within the field and suggested that such attempts will always be resisted. He reflected, "Standards have always been resisted. Attempts have been made but have failed."

Similarly, two participants (15%) commented on the ambivalence that exists in the field about accreditation and certification. Susan admitted, "although I'm a collaborator by heart, I think, 'I don't need another accrediting body.'"

Field needs to demonstrate its unique value. Roughly half (54%) the participants also emphasized the need for OD to demonstrate its unique value. Participants pointed out that the boundaries of the field overlap with other disciplines, OD offers no recognized value by the client systems, and OD has difficulty showing a return on investment.

For example, Alan pointed out the simultaneous overlap with and gap between OD and management consulting and between OD and strategy, concluding, “I think both fields are losing” because they fail to benefit from what each discipline brings to the table, such as business (on the management consulting and strategy side) and humanistic approaches (on the OD side). He speculated, “there’s a space in the middle of that I think that’s really important that this field could recapture.” Similarly, Emma added that OD is seen as a soft practice, and that this reputation must change, while Danielle contended that OD is simply not understood well in business. A final challenge to OD, according to participants, is that OD practitioners have difficulty demonstrating a return on the client investment. Ivan explained, “People in the field are sweating it as companies are asking for [return on investment], impact, results, many can’t demonstrate. Many are in it for the fad, not expected to prove they know what they’re doing.”

Possibilities for Collaboration

Participants were asked several questions about collaboration to examine how it might happen in the field. First, they were asked to describe the current efforts at collaboration going on in the field. Second, they were asked to identify the need for collaboration. Third, they were asked to speculate about the purpose and benefits of collaboration. Fourth, they were asked to identify potential barriers to collaboration. Finally, they were asked to identify the success factors for collaboration.

Current efforts at and need for collaboration. Participants then were asked about the nature of and potential for collaboration in the field (see Table 3). Participants’ responses pointed to three themes: collaboration largely occurs through individual boundary spanning (69%), systemic efforts largely fail or are not attempted (54%), and some systemic efforts are going on (38%). It is notable that 69% of participants shared

that collaboration largely occurs through individual boundary spanning because this is not consistent with traditional definitions of collaboration. For example, Alan offered the example of being a member of multiple professional OD associations and Cynthia similarly discussed her use of multiple listservs for collaboration.

Table 3

Participants' Views of Current Collaborative Efforts within the Field

Theme	<i>n</i>	%
Largely occurs through individual boundary spanning	9	69%
Systemic efforts largely fail or are not attempted	7	54%
Some systemic efforts going on	5	38%
Collaboration is needed	5	38%

N = 13

Roughly half (54%) the participants commented that systemic efforts largely fail or are not attempted. Seven participants pointed out that systemic collaborative effort often are not attempted and that those that are attempted generally fail. Ivan succinctly stated, “Yes, greater collaboration is needed, but these things fall on their a--. Academy types don’t stay engaged.” Cynthia contended, “There’s some organizations where they do have some collaboration, but not many. Those are very much the exception.” Similarly, Donald offered, “I think on an organization basis, there’s sometimes attempts, but they usually don’t go very far. I’m not aware of major collaborative efforts.” Tara elaborated on specific recent examples of this. She said,

I think that I’ve been very surprised at some of the overtures that have been made and not accepted by members in the field. I know of one particular one just recently this year that was made by ODN to NTL and NTL did not accept it and that would have been an obvious one to have accepted it. . . . as far as coordination, I’ve seen almost none of it.

Only 38% of participants reported that some systemic efforts are currently being made. Donald cited collaborative efforts being made by a professor at Bowling Green University:

He's been doing a conference called Nexus for Change which is basically around large groups . . . one of the interesting things that Steve's [Cady] been doing has been trying to bring sort of practitioners and academics together and have better integration of research with practice. And actually Jean Bartunek is big on this . . . [Steve's trying to bring together] practitioners and researchers.

Susan offered, "There's also a group . . . meeting maybe over the past 2 or 3 years, the directors of the OD programs, the academic directors [meet to share/formalize curricula]." Similarly, Brodwin said, "There's a current effort among Program Directors to create program review. A lot of it is ideological." Brodwin's comment is in reference to Organization Development Educators Association (Minahan, 2012), which at the time of data gathering, was still quite new. It has since become more formalized.

Moreover, only 38% believed collaboration in the field is needed. Cynthia emphasized, "It's absolutely necessary. It's totally in there. Not even 'to some degree.'" Ivan contended, "Greater collaboration is needed," but wondered how this might occur, asking, "The question is how to pull them together and keep them together on an ongoing, sustainable basis?" Tara added that lack of collaboration leads to fragmentation and that "it contributes to the lack of clarity about where the field is at this time and what the field is at this time."

Purpose and benefits of collaboration. Participants' responses about the purpose and benefits of collaboration pointed to three themes, each mentioned by roughly half the participants (see Table 4): enriching practice and theory in the field (54%), enhancing the field's credibility and relevance (54%), and promoting the field's survival and political

influence (46%). Jason shared enthusiasm about the benefits for both parties when practitioners and academics collaborate. He said,

One of the key reasons to work on connecting the academic and research and the practice communities together is to do just that, is to give practitioners access to really powerful theory that can be applied productively in practice and can help their work go more successfully. And similarly that the information that gets generated during that process of application then feeds back to the academic community that allows them to ask more interesting research questions.

Table 4

Purpose and Benefits of Collaboration

Theme	n	%
Enrich practice and theory in the field	7	54%
Enhance the field's credibility and relevance	7	54%
Promote the field's survival and political influence	6	46%

N = 13

Roughly half (54%) the participants additionally stated collaboration would be beneficial if it enhanced the field's credibility and relevance. Danielle explained, "There would be value if it created a clear identity (marketability) and if it provided accreditation/certification (credibility)." Mitch discussed the role of collaboration in creating common ground, especially with regard to aligning values and methodologies in the field. He explained, "part of the opportunity is to create a taxonomy of theories, concepts, and practice methodologies and create some standardization with built-in flexibility."

The final purpose mentioned by participants was promoting the field's survival and political influence (46%). Emma contended that some people in the field were motivated for collaboration "because they were desperate to see how they could make money or survive. To me, the issue is really that whole sustainability." Similarly, Ivan

stated, “Compelling purpose: Survival!” and Susan proposed, “[People] would have to come together and say, ‘Okay, gang, you know, it’s just gone too far. OD has to be recognized or we’re going to going to fade away into nothingness.’”

Barriers to collaboration. Participants identified several barriers to collaboration (see Table 5). Four themes emerged, all of which were cited by more than two thirds of the participants: divergence in the field (100%), loosely structured leadership within the field (85%), turf issues (85%), and lack of a committed community with availability and energy for collaboration (69%).

Table 5

Participants’ Views of the Barriers to Collaborative Efforts within the Field

Theme	<i>n</i>	%
Divergence in the field Fragmentation, specialization, and lack of clarity about the field (100%) Different organizational purposes and values (54%) Lack of perceived purpose or benefit for collaboration (46%)	13	100%
Loosely structured leadership within the field No clear, neutral leadership in the field to convene the effort (69%) Associations are poorly organized (38%) Lack of governance structure in the field (31%) Lack of organizational awareness of the need for collaboration (23%)	11	85%
Turf issues Associations attempt to claim a space in the field (46%) Associations competing for the same membership (31%) Self-interest overrides collective interest of the field (38%) Scarcity/win-lose/survival mindset (23%)	11	85%
Lack of a committed community with availability and energy for collaboration	9	69%

N = 13

All 13 participants cited divergence in the field as a barrier to collaboration, such as fragmentation, specialization, and lack of clarity about the field; different organizational purposes and values; and lack of perceived purpose benefits. Danielle

suggested, “OD people may be intrinsically averse to cohesion, alignment—being organized.” Mitch offered some rationale for the apparent fragmentation, saying,

The field has been increasingly fragmented with different professional groupings, networks, etc that tend to share the same implicit [ideas, but] there’s no one unifying body that connects it all. In 1993-1994 was involved with ODN in creating a universal set of standards. They probably tried to get so much stakeholder input it was paralyzing, such divergent views.

Brodwin cited the existence of different organizational purposes and values as a barrier to collaboration, stating, “Values congruence today is different from the older generation. It’s bigger than the divide between practitioners and academics. It’s a divide between values and motivations.”

Eleven of the 13 participants (85%) identified loosely structured leadership within the field as a barrier to collaboration, such as lacking clear, neutral leadership in the field to convene the effort; associations being poorly organized; lacking a governance structure in the field; and lacking organizational awareness of the need for collaboration. To solve the lack of clear, neutral leadership in the field to convene the effort, Danielle proposed,

Maybe if the people that hold power or influence across the existing groups could convene a “United Nations of OD”. There would have to be leadership credibility to justify the effort and be called by such a body once it’s set up could be compelling. A grass roots effort would not be of interest (no power to get anything done). But somebody or some bodies would have to step up and it would require sponsorship from several organizations. So who could have the power to convene? Burke, Seashore, Block, Worley, Norlin?

Victor was positive about the present, though, saying, “Those days are essentially over.

ODI and ODN people—there’s a lot of crossover there today, and so that’s just not much of an issue at all anymore.” Ivan mentioned the need for strong leadership but the lack of leaders stepping up. He implored,

We need people . . . that will get up on platform and lead a crusade. Need an academic to lead it to a profession. Get some others who want to spark

some things. Practitioners don't want to, academics don't have the time, don't have a professional group to serve as the brains of the field to talk about the field.

Alan suggested that the organizations have lost their purpose over time. He stated,

These networks actually really just revolve around an event. Bay Area ODN was about an event. I think it's arguable that ODN is also about an event. Because they're organizations that may have served their purpose. If you ask now about their missions, it's hard to really describe what they're really there to do anymore. . . . What is it we build? What is it we started out to do and what are we leaving?

Speaking to the lack of governance structure in the field, Danielle asserted, "We need a trans-organizational entity to connect the groups and agree on standards and ethics," while Mitch claimed that some hold the opposite view. "There are some in the field that will say that structure and intentionality are not needed. It is the way it needs to be: flexible, adaptive and inclusive."

Another 85% of participants identified turf issues as a barrier to collaboration. This idea was articulated in four ways associations attempting to claim a space in the field, associations competing for the same membership, self-interest overriding the collective interest of the field, and having a scarcity, win-lose mindset.

For example, Ivan stated, "People in the field are protective of their own turf. Organizationally, we've built silos: ODN, AoM ODC, Masters program silos." Emma characterized this as "Territorial, tribalism." She elaborated, "It's 'my organization is better than your organization,' even when we're members of multiple organizations." She shared, "IODA, in particular really got threatened by us, because we had the word, Global, in our name." Victor also gave specific examples of turf wars. He shared,

The OD Network members believed that they owned the field, and how dare anybody presume otherwise. And the OD division of ASTD, while they didn't necessarily think they owned the field, they wanted to become their own entity. So that's why boundary-spanning was not in the cards

very much, because ASTD was trying to establish its own version of everything, and ODN was, “You don’t have a right to do that,” and so forth.

Hillary noted that the various organizations are competing for the same membership:

sometimes you’ll see the same names going through the same things. So I think there’s overlaps . . . I think you’ve got individuals who are perhaps playing in a lot of those same spaces. . . . So they’re pulling from a similar audience, tailoring it maybe a little bit more to internals or something . . . So they’re all looking for members, they’re all looking for people to attend conferences which is where their bread and butter is formed even if their purpose may be somewhat different. If that makes sense.

In a similar vein, Emma laughed, saying, “When you’re targeting the same audience, can collaboration happen? No.”

Donald described regarding a scarcity mindset that “when you’re in that survival mode it’s hard to collaborate because you’ve got your head down and you’re just trying to [get] enough people to our conference?” Susan related,

You know, fine, I can share with you but then it comes into competition, right? Well, you know, if I give you my secret sauce of strategic learning contracts or whatever, you know, you might adopt them and then how do I make myself distinct and you need them different? So it was always a balance between collaboration and competition.

Roughly two thirds (69%) of the participants stated that lack of a committed community with availability and energy for collaboration. Many echoed Susan’s simple statement: “Time is a big one.” Cynthia linked time and motivation. She said, “Connectivity and coordination and collaboration is time-dependent, and I think people will choose to spend time if it serves their motivations . . . What do I need here, and is that big enough for me to give my time?” Tara mentioned that she personally does not always have the time and energy to collaborate.

I don't see myself as spending a great deal of time getting organized, but I certainly would be a supporter of it. Yes, I certainly would be very interested in something like this being pursued, yes. But I wouldn't want to be the leader of it at this point . . . What I've discovered is that I really don't—I shouldn't do that because I just am too far extended.

Success factors for collaboration. Participants identified two primary success factors for collaboration (see Table 6). Roughly half (46%) named a compelling and clear purpose and roughly one third (31%) stated having the right leader and people present.

Table 6

Participants' Views of the Success Factors for Collaborative Efforts within the Field

Theme	<i>n</i>	%
Compelling and clear purpose	6	46%
Have the right leader and people there	4	31%

N = 13

Cynthia elaborated that an individual may have a personal stake in the collaboration, and that provides the motivation to engage in it. She described of her own motivations and actions as, “What’s in it for me? What do I need here, and is that big enough for me to give my time? What’s the context for connecting, coordinating and collaborating?” She also addressed motivations for organizations to collaborate, saying,

The context is how do we help our organization succeed in mission-critical changes? That’s a larger context than any of the professional societies ask. It’s different. And so for me, it’s shifting paradigm in order to advance the cause of connectivity for a purpose, for an outcome, as opposed to connectivity because it’s a nice thing to do, or collaborating.

Hillary emphasized that any collaboration needs to be a serious, efficacious, well-positioned, well-supported effort. She explained, “It’s got to be something that’s going to make a difference and we think that has some legs on it that’s going to be meaningful.”

Roughly one third (31%) stressed the importance of having the right leader and people there. For Donald, simply knowing the other collaborators may compel a busy

person to agree to collaborate. He further outlined how multiple players could be convened around a common issue of interest:

If you took an issue like, I don't know, layoffs of the economy or response to layoffs in the economy, and you brought in practitioners and researchers, that would be a different way of going at it . . . The institutions could sponsor it, but if they could get together on an issue that had some juice for people that might be interesting.

Summary

When asked to evaluate the OD field, participants believed it was struggling to find its bearings, needs definition and formalization, and needs to demonstrate unique value. When asked to evaluate current collaborative efforts within the field, participants noted that collaboration largely occurs through individual boundary spanning, although this does not satisfy traditional definitions of collaboration. Some participants noted that systemic efforts are going on in the field, while others believed that systemic efforts largely fail or are not attempted. Only 38% of participants believed collaboration in the field was needed. The perceived purpose and benefits of collaboration include enriching practice and theory, enhancing the field's credibility and relevance, and promoting the field's survival and political influence.

Despite the possible benefits, participants voiced many barriers to collaboration, such as divergence in the field, loosely structured leadership, turf issues, and lack of a committed community with availability and energy for collaboration. Participants also identified two primary success factors for collaborative efforts, including having a compelling and clear purpose and having the right leader and people there.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the interest and motivation for large-scale, systematic collaboration among the professional associations interested in OD. The research questions to be explored were:

1. What is the state of the OD field according to those inside the field?
2. What are the perceived need, benefits, and success factors of collaboration?
3. What are the barriers to collaboration between these organizations?

This chapter provides a discussion of the study results. First, key findings are reviewed and conclusions are drawn. Second, practical recommendations emerging from the conclusions are offered. Third, limitations of the study are acknowledged. Fourth, suggestions for continued research are outlined.

Findings and Conclusions

The findings and conclusions are discussed for each research question. The state of field is discussed first, followed by possibilities for collaboration, and barriers to collaboration.

State of the field. The overall sense of the study participants is that the OD field is in a state of decline and faces several key threats and obstacles. Based on participants' reports, OD began as an innovative and unique field, but it has failed to continue building new knowledge. Moreover, it appears to have evolved and diversified away from the core identity that originally made it unique, which was its humanistic approach to achieving business excellence.

These findings are consistent with several other authors (Church et al., 1999; Porras & Bradford, 2004; Weidner, 2004). For example, Cummings and Worley (2014)

stated that three of the five “stems” of OD have declined. However, although they believed that the remaining two stems—quality of work life (socio-technical systems and employee involvement) and strategic change—continue to enhance the rigor and relevance of the field, participants of the present study do not appear to agree given the concerns they voiced regarding OD having lost its bearing, OD lacking innovation, and OD being in a state of decline overall. Although a minority (15%) hesitated to state the field is in decline, not one asserted that the field is growing or thriving.

These same researchers further believed that poor definitions of the field were one of its greatest weaknesses (Beitler, 2005; Boje, 1999; Greiner, 2004). This also was a key finding of the present study. Participants explained that the field of OD is seldom recognized, many OD departments have been either dissolved or rebranded as Organizational Effectiveness or Leadership Development, and other labels seem to have more currency, including “coaching,” “talent management,” “succession planning,” “change management,” and sometimes “learning.” This suggests that despite a clear and documented call for greater definition of the field, the call remains unanswered. This is a serious threat to the field, particularly as related fields (e.g., coaching) continue to grow and strengthen their boundaries.

Interestingly, Worley and Feyerherm’s (2003) prediction that OD would move toward innovation and learning is not yet clearly emergent. Although Worley and Feyerherm asserted that learning and innovation would become important, the interviews conducted for the present study stated that innovation is needed. This suggests that there was little, if any, perceived innovation in the field at the time of data gathering. The challenge here is how one defines “innovation in the field.” For example, given OD’s porous boundaries, some might confirm that innovation is taking place within OD, even

if it technically taking place in OD-related disciplines, such as the many recent developments in the field of sustainability.

Based on the findings of this study, OD's renewal would involve academics and practitioners rediscovering and recommitting to the field's core values, such as humanistic approaches to sustainable change, launching research in the pursuit of new knowledge and innovation, and familiarizing everyone with this new knowledge and effectively identifying and communicating the unique value they provide, as distinct from related professions. This then raises the question of just where the connectivity, connection, and collaboration will take place in any systemic way given the current state of professional association and conferencing. Whether this means a new conferencing structure or some collaborative efforts among existing entities needs further exploration. Each path has its merits and challenges.

All of these efforts must begin with an incisive understanding of client systems and their issues. That is, the field's core values must not only resonate with OD's traditional ways of being; but also, these values must have practical relevance for clients. The research must be inspired by and connected to real-world issues that are important to clients. Finally, OD's value proposition must have relevance to the clients who are paying for the interventions. At present, based on participants' accounts, clients do not recognize OD as a solution to their problems. Almost every participant of this study (85%) characterized the field in some way as "self-absorbed" or prone to "navel gazing." OD seems to be overly internally focused and might better clarify its purpose and increase its relevance if its body of knowledge, interventions, and methodologies were formally organized to align with client needs and priorities in the way that clients talk about them.

To regain vitality as a field, Victor believed that practitioners need to return to how the field began, which was convening conversations around practitioners' failures. He explained that as a field, practitioners need to resume the original focus on questions such as: What are the client's needs? Whose needs are we working? He noted that current conversations in the field, instead, center on practitioners' touting their success. He added, "That's why I don't go to conferences anymore." With a renewed focus on improvement over marketing, the core values, innovation, and unique value may re-emerge. Once these milestones are attained, the field's relevance may become apparent and professionalization and formalization (e.g., standards) may become possible. There may well be examples of "positive deviance" and successes and challenges in personal practice; however, these were not surfaced in this research. OD conferences and journals are not alone in the pursuit of what works. That mode might be leavened by convening an increased number of honest conversations in the form of panels or discussion groups around what's not working and possible explanations for failure. It is important to keep in mind that both diagnostic and dialogic approaches can be applied to benefit and improve the field.

Possibilities for collaboration. Participants had mixed views regarding the need for collaboration in the field. They could imagine compelling potential value; however any further discussions circled back to who initiates, who leads, and how it is sustained. Interestingly, although the focus of the study was collaboration among the various professional organization within the OD field, the participants' responses focused on collaboration at an individual level, both because this was their interest and because their experiences observing or participating in collaboration at an association level had had little success.

Success factors for collaboration, as reported by participants, include having a compelling and clear purpose; figuring out the level at which the collaboration is needed; having the right leader and people there; making collaboration a serious, efficacious, well-positioned, supported effort; and pursuing innovation, which might spark collaboration. These findings are consistent with past literature. For example, Cummings (1984) stressed the criticality of a common purpose for convening trans-organizational systems. Conversations with participants as well as informal ones confirm that a universally compelling purpose has not been articulated. These success factors were relevant to collaboration at both the individual and association levels.

Vangen and Huxham (2006) acknowledged the substantial challenges and anxieties that individuals and organizations face when attempting to collaborate across boundaries. Based on their work (as well as Cummings' [1984] work), it appears that a central convener is essential for nurturing and directing the collaboration. They advised engaging the various parties in activities that are "highly facilitative concerned with embracing, empowering, involving, and mobilizing partners—whilst at the same time being adept at manipulating agendas and playing the politics" (p. 5). Accepting and managing the development of trust, negotiating power issues, and attending to the details are important. Given the research available on collaboration, an important first step is soberly considering whether any common ground exists (or could exist) and who the neutral convener could be. These success factors were again applicable to collaboration at both the individual and association levels.

However, based on the findings of this study, energy and interest for collaboration appear to be very limited. This is not surprising, given the status of the individuals interviewed for the present study. Although they may benefit by defining the field,

enriching practice and theory, promoting the field's survival and political influence, and enhancing the field's credibility and relevance, their work is not likely to be hampered by the absence of collaborations with this aim. Moreover, many are at the zenith of their careers and community building efforts would likely be viewed as a time consuming distraction from important research or rewarding consulting efforts.

Furthermore, many senior participants in this study questioned out loud who among them would have the political clout to convene the requisite "guiding coalition" to initiate a systemic convergence of interest groups. In fact, it appears that those that have the clout may not want to hassle with the politics of it all. It's either ironic or emblematic that the field has not produced leaders with a passion for organizing their own community.

At the same time, there likely is a large body of professionals who may have energy for collaboration and who would benefit from such activity. This is reasonable to conclude, particularly since the possible purposes of collaboration align with key needs of and threats to the field. For example, professionals who are new to the field have much more to lose if the threats to the field continue. Therefore, it is important to continue this research with a wider population of OD academics and professionals. While generational stratification was not in the scope of this research, there was some diversity among those interviewed. There were a few mid-career professionals who all shared frustrations with the "old guard" in their respective professional associations. These younger professionals reported similar experiences of wanting to participate and shape the direction of their associations only to be squelched and even marginalized by the "powers that be." Their common conclusion was to focus on their own careers and abandon their associations as unresponsive and irrelevant to their own futures.

Barriers to collaboration. Participants voiced many barriers to collaboration, such as divergence in the field, loosely structured leadership, turf issues, lack of a committed community with availability and energy for collaboration, poor definition of the field, lack of perceived purpose or benefit for collaboration, lack of sustained dialogue, and a lack of focus on learning. Similarly, other authors noted problems with fragmentation in the field (Church et al., 1999; Weidner, 2004). Not only are adherents to the field fragmented through the professional associations and allegiances, it is long recognized that OD professionals tend towards individualism and counter-dependence. Perhaps the structural fragmentation and lack of leadership are authentic manifestations of our collective preferences. OD practitioners want to work with organizations, but many of them do not want to work for, let alone lead, organizations. Of course, practitioners can be and are of great help and service from outside the organizational structure.

Looking again to collaboration literature, it appears that the three-step process offered by Cummings (1984) could be helpful here. The first step, convention, focuses on evaluating whether collaboration should occur. This includes considering its costs and benefits as well as the tasks involved. The second step, organization, poses the question of how can the various parties best organize for task performance. This includes considering leadership, structures, communication, and policies and procedures related to the collaboration. The third step, evaluation, occurs on an ongoing basis during the life of the collaboration. This step focuses on evaluating how the collaboration is going. Activities involves include evaluating performance outcomes, the quality of the interaction among the various parties, and member satisfaction. Reflecting on these steps, it is apparent that initiating, conducting, and evaluating collaboration is a sizable effort in

itself. To merit such an effort, the various parties must stand to gain a substantial benefit. Based on the findings of this study, it appears that clarity about the potential benefits is lacking.

These findings suggest that the likelihood that little collaboration will occur in the field is slim—especially without concerted action. At the same time, the situation is not without hope. Although definition of the field and a pattern of divergence may be difficult to resolve, the collaborative effort could emerge from directions not reflected in the views and experiences of this group of study participants. One such approach could be crowdsourcing, defined as soliciting input, services, or content from a large group of individuals, especially when conducted online (Howe, 2006). Public-private partnerships and networks are other possible avenues.

One possible way to initiate collaboration in a way that serves practitioners, academics, and the field alike is to form communities of practice centered around types of client systems or client needs. This recommendation is discussed in detail in the next section.

Recommendations

Several recommendations are offered based on the results of the present study. Participants pointed out that lack of definition in the field and failure to communicate OD's unique value hampers the field. To address this issue, it is important to contemplate and identify what the unique properties are that distinguish OD professionals from other professionals who are operating in the same space. For example, what are the key differences between an OD-based trainer versus a trainer from ASTD (in the case that these are two different individuals)? What are the differences between OD-based change leadership and change leadership offered by a management consulting firm? Clarifying

these differences can help to both define the field and clarify OD's unique value. At the same time, it must be noted that these questions have been asked and answered; yet, the seeming divisions and confusions remain. Therefore, a deeper inquiry needs to occur to examine why these counterproductive divisions continue to exist.

Second, participants observed that “turf issues” is one of the problems hampering collaboration. The three largest OD associations, ODN, NTL, and AOM-ODC, account for the majority of OD practitioners and researchers. Although each of these associations offers a different value proposition—NTL focuses on training, ODN focuses on connecting the community, and AOM-ODC focuses on research—an alliance that acknowledged each area of specialization might represent that best of the best. What if ODN re-envisioned itself as a convener of self-identified communities? For example, NTL could reside in the training entity of the organization and AOM-ODC could bring forth the theory and research. This conceptualization of the field could reduce the perceived competition and increase the possibilities for productive collaboration, although in the wake of these shifts, new organizations may emerge if these organizations continue their decline.

Third, an effective strategy for collaboration may be to form a guiding coalition of credible stakeholders across the field who endorse collaboration and resolution of the threats facing the field. This coalition could be convened around questions of: What is our highest intention? What are our clients' needs? What is our unique value as a field? Convening such conversations regionally throughout the various OD networks also might inspire a collective conversation over time that ultimately enhances clarity about the field's contribution to clients and the relevance of those contributions. These conversations could be convened live and in person or, alternatively, online using the

various technologies available. In particular, establishing a neutral, participant-driven virtual forum may be helpful for convening OD professionals around skills or client systems. Virtual technologies also would offer a forum for sharing presentations, blogs, resources, and various downloads. The forum could be used as a tool for igniting interest throughout the field.

Fourth, despite the possibilities of a guiding coalition for strengthening the field, convening the “great conversation” is not the only option for doing so. Namely, it is possible, given the Law of the Few (Gladwell, 2000), that leveraging a few knowledgeable “mavens,” well-known “connectors,” and persuasive “salespeople” to advance the purposes of defining and advancing the field may be an effective strategy for strengthening the field. Moreover, although one might immediately want to select these “few” from among the leading thinkers in the field, it is critical not to limit this effort to them. For example, many participants in this study were such leading thinkers and these individuals reported having very limited time and energy for such efforts. They shared they were over-subscribed with high-end clients, book deals, and life commitments, among other things.

Therefore, to shape the future of the field, it is necessary to tap into the passionate (and often newer) professionals who have the time, focus, energy, and perceived neutrality to collaborate for the purposes of advancing the field. For example, these individuals could do data gathering and analysis regarding strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the field, propose possible directions and discuss these with others, conduct successive data gathering and analysis, and build grassroots interest in strengthening the field. Importantly, these individuals must be (a) young enough to have time and energy for these activities, (b) old enough to have professional grit and

experience, and (c) connected enough to have access to members of the various OD communities and degree programs. It also may make sense to generate participation from across the field, such as senior and emeritus participants, many of whom helped to initially establish the field; mid-level academics and professionals; and new entrants, such as young professionals and graduate students.

Fifth, forming communities of practice around different kinds of client systems, such as nonprofit, for-profit, public sector, and community-based, might help to reduce turf wars, increase focus on value and relevance, and ultimately enhance the vitality of the field. The dynamics, drivers, and needs of these different types of organizations require different knowledge bases, sets of experience, and skills in the professionals that serve them. Thus, communities of practice may help professionals connect to the field overall and, further, help to reduce competition among the OD organizations while still allowing for cross-pollination and common threads of core beliefs, values, and behaviors.

Limitations

The present study utilized a relatively small sample of OD academics and practitioners, but it did sample all (or nearly all) of the professional associations with an interest in OD. Therefore, the findings cannot be considered to be representative of all OD academics and professionals. Additionally, the study utilized a qualitative research interview design, which relies heavily on researcher skill for credibility of the results. The researcher is a developing researcher; therefore, it is possible that his participation in the discussion subconsciously influenced the direction of the interview and the results that emerged. Additionally, consistent with any research study, his own beliefs and biases may have unconsciously influenced the data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Future studies could include additional validation procedures or other methods to help control for bias.

The participants in this study were experienced and accomplished OD professionals who expressed having little time and energy for collaboration beyond direct, personal collaborations. It is critical to keep in mind that these individuals do not represent all OD professionals. For example, it is necessary to tap into younger, less experienced professionals who have more time, energy, and likely the need for collaboration. Whereas the experienced professionals interviewed in this study have already established their clients, careers, and businesses, younger and less experienced professionals still need to build a career, make a difference, and establish their relevance. It is possible that the reason the participants in this study perceived “no compelling purpose” for collaboration is because these individuals personally have no need for collaboration. However, younger professionals appear to have a very real and imminent need for this. Clarifying the definition, value, and relevance of the field represents their inheritance. To determine how representative these findings are for other professionals in the field, it is necessary to expand the present study across different populations within OD.

One further limitation is in the fact that the data were gathered between 2006 and 2011. The field has continued to develop in the 3 to 8 years since the interviews were conducted, such as the formalization of the Organization Development Educators Association, which was only an informal gathering as of 2011. Another professional association that has formalized itself since data collection is the International Society for Organization Development and Change (2014). These associations represent renewed

focus on collaboration and professionalism in the field, possibly resulting in differing participants' views.

Suggestions for Research

The leading candidate for additional research is to repeat the study, drawing participants from across the OD field, including graduate students, young professionals, and mid-level professionals. These additional data would allow for the present study's findings to be confirmed or modified. Based on an improved cross-section of OD professionals, it may be discovered a need for greater relevance across the field is perceived and that individuals are willing to take action to improve the clarity and perceived value of the field. In addition to interview research, an appreciative inquiry intervention also may be valuable for helping identify issues and opportunities for advancing the field. Creating a polarity map regarding the desire for autonomy versus the desire for collective action also might be valuable as an exercise for data collection and analysis.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the interest and motivation for large-scale, systematic collaboration among many professional associations that have an interest in the practice of OD. A qualitative research interview study was conducted with 13 academics and practitioners in the OD field. Each participant completed one interview that lasted 45 to 1 hour in duration. The data was examined using content analysis.

Study findings indicated that the OD field is struggling, it needs definition and formalization, and that it needs to demonstrate its unique value. The level of collaboration in the field was determined to be low and participants expressed little interest, time, and energy for initiating collaboration. Nevertheless, they believed that a

possible purpose and benefits of collaboration include enhancing the practice and theory, survival, political influence, credibility, relevance, and definition of the field. Despite these benefits, participants identified many barriers to collaboration, such as divergence in the field, loosely structured leadership, turf issues, lack of a committed community with availability and energy for collaboration, poor definition of the field, lack of perceived purpose or benefit for collaboration, lack of sustained dialogue, and a lack of focus on learning. Success factors for collaboration include having a compelling and clear purpose; figuring out the level at which the collaboration is needed; having the right leader and people there; making collaboration a serious, efficacious, well-positioned, supported effort; and pursuing innovation, which might spark collaboration.

Recommendations include identify the unique properties of OD that distinguish its professionals from other professionals operating in the same space and clarifying the unique contribution of each OD association to the field. Additionally, several alternatives for igniting collaboration are suggested, including forming a guiding coalition of credible stakeholders across the field, leveraging a few key individuals to ignite grassroots interest in collaboration, tapping into the passionate (and often newer) professionals who have the time, focus, energy, and perceived neutrality to collaborate for the purposes of advancing the field. Finally, communities of practice formed around different client systems may be useful for helping to reduce turf wars, increase focus on value and relevance, and ultimately enhance the vitality of the field. Continued research is suggested using participants from across the OD field to help confirm, clarify, and extend the present study's findings.

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Appendix A: Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Participant: _____

Principal Investigator: Wade Shows _____

Title of Project: Examining the State of the Field and Possibilities for
Collaboration in Organization Development

1. I _____, agree to participate in the research study being conducted by Wade Shows, as part of his graduate studies for a master's of science in organization development under the direction of Dr. Christopher Worley.

2. *The overall purpose of this research is:*
to explore the interest and motivation for large-scale, systematic collaboration among many professional associations that have an interest in the practice of OD

3. My participation will involve the following:
A one-on-one, 1-hour interview

4. My participation in the study will be in the duration of 1 hour. The study shall be conducted by telephone or at in-person.

5. I understand that the possible benefits to myself or society from this research are:
Increase my understanding of the organization development field, including its challenges and the possibilities of collaboration

6. I understand that there are certain risks and discomforts that might be associated with this research. These risks include:
Possible emotional upset as I recall and discuss my experiences in the organization development field

7. I understand that I may choose not to participate in this research.

8. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate and/or withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

9. I understand that the investigator(s) and the University will take all reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of my records and my identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this project. The confidentiality of my records will be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Under California law, there are exceptions to confidentiality, including suspicion that a child, elder, or dependent adult is being abused, or if an individual discloses an intent to harm him/herself or others.
10. I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact Dr. Christopher Worley at 310-568-5598 or chris.worley@pepperdine.edu if I have other questions or concerns about this research. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I understand that I can contact Dr. Doug Leigh, Chair of the Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board, Pepperdine University, at 310-568-5753 or doug.leigh@pepperdine.edu.
11. I understand to my satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have received a copy of this informed consent form which I have read and understand. I hereby consent to participate in the research described above.

Participant's Signature

Date

Audio Recording

- ☐ I give my consent to have my interview audio-recorded
- ☐ I do not give my consent to have my interview audio-recorded

Participant's Signature

Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.

Principal Investigator

Date

Appendix B: Interview Script

1. What is your sense of the current state of the practice OD in terms of connectivity, coordination and collaboration across the varied constituencies that make of the field?.
2. Do you belong to a professional organization connected to OD, such as ODN, ODI, NTL, AoM, etc? If so, which ones?
3. Do you perceive a need for greater collaboration, connectivity and coordination between the professional organizations that have an interest in organization development? Why do you say that?
4. What could be a compelling purpose for collaboration(s) across the many professional organizations? i.e. What value could be gained, exchanged, co-created?
5. When you think of all the different professional organizations connected with the practice of OD, what do you think that they have in common? In other words, do they have any compelling common ground?
6. What barriers, if any, do you see to greater collaboration and interaction among the professional associations?
7. Have you collaborated with members or representatives from other professional organizations? If yes, can you describe the nature of the collaboration? How likely are you to do so in the future?
8. How or where could you see yourself getting involved in integrating the field?
9. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being very high, how would you rate your personal willingness to get involved, organized, or lead efforts to connect and coordinate the field?